

Posted by u/LordsOfJoop AI 8 hours ago

Two Stories About Three Apes.

OC OC

Two Stories About Three Apes.

"Clearly," the Terran said, "There's been a serious miscommunication." His bland, wan smile was infuriating to the supplicant waiting in front of his earthwood desk, seated in a padded chair, glaring at him in absolute outrage, the umbrage radiating from him with a harsh, nearly-tangible aura.

The supplicant, one Heste Fier, diplomatic envoy from the Dni homeworld collective, gritted their chitinous teeth, rage inducing more and more veins in their face to become inflamed, flushing their carpace with new energy. "No, Mr. Egils, there has not been a miscommunication," he said, "What I said is what I meant. You, being the entirety of the Terran community, must evacuate our space, lest you find yourself on the wrong end of our guns. Does that penetrate?" With rancor, they slumped into their chair, hovering on the edge of psychosis. Only a Terran could insult someone so rapidly, easily, and with a smile - and be absolutely safe behind the same rules of conduct which prevented all-out war from happening.

"And I said what I meant," the Terran said, "That your guns are woefully underpowered, to say nothing of far fewer than ours, and poorly placed. You outnumber us by only six to five, which isn't much of an advantage, as we see it. You struck first - and we petitioned, successfully, for sanctions against your people." Then he smirked. "Take the loss, Elder Fier, because if you step too far, I will bore you with the two stories about three apes I have to tell everyone."

Confusion set in on the Dni's face, his beetle-like brow furrowing in the universal sign of deep, abiding concern.

"What."

The Terran nodded gravely, then gestured to the holographic globe on his desk, illuminating it with a soft touch to its near-opaque surface. "That's where the stories began, Elder Fier, and those who hear them, they regret it." Then he settled into his own chair, gesturing for the Dni to continue unabated.

"Whatever mental game that is," Elder Fier said, "It won't work. We will be invading your homeworld, colonies, and held territories. If you resist the occupations, there will be immediate, and terminal, reprisals. Does *that* penetrate?" With a wicked grin, the Dni crossed his arms, all four of them, over his barrel chest, awaiting the reply.

To this, the Terran nodded slowly.

"The stories, then," he said quietly. As he leaned forward, he took a drink of water from his glass, draining it halfway, then nudged it gently towards his counterpart, and cleared his throat before he continued, his voice hollow, absent all emotion. A vague sense of resignation could be discerned easily, though, from his body language, a thing that the Dni excelled at for their diplomatic corps.

With his eyes closed, he began to speak.

"In our history," he said, "We have a religious text that describes a great watercraft, called an ark. A giant boat, in other words, which was meant to save a single family and a mating pair of every terrestrial creature alive at the time." Then he raised his hand, still the Dni's next and most obvious question. "Not the important part - yes, we acknowledge it's just a story. There's an additional story which follows this, though."

He leaned back slight, continuing his stories.

"That story, it's about an angry, vengeful god, the largest at the time, wanting to punish the transgressors against his chosen laws. So, he was going to drown the entire world, save for those aboard the ark." He then angled his head down, sighing, shaking it from side to side with regret. "It rained for forty cycles, drowning every man, woman and child of my homeworld, and they suffered greatly as it happened. Only the family aboard that boat survived."

Then he looked to the Dni.

"The second story, Elder Fier, is how my species arose from its humble beginnings. You need to remember what your people so often call ours." He smirked softly. "You call us 'apes'. Well, that's.. not entirely inaccurate, in that we're primates. In our distant ancestry, we arose from apes, or something close enough to them." Then he sighed. "We've been called worse, and deserved it, so for most of us, we don't mind this term. Irritating, sure, but that's the point, isn't it?"

To this, the Dni nodded, unashamed of his own racist tendencies, then motioned for the Terran to continue.

"In our history, the genetic one, our ape ancestors likely stood in a group, and there were three apes." He then smiled a little. "One who could hunt, another could gather, and the third, he built tools." Then he gestured to the room's many artifacts from his own homeworld - ancient tools, pictures of flora and fauna, and ample antique weapons.

With that same resigned smile, he continued further.

"The third ape, he built better weapons for the first," he said, "And tools for the second, to improve their yields. Because that's how we survived - we helped each other, almost constantly." Then his smile darkened. "Then one ape killed another, because they wanted to, or could. In the end, it doesn't matter. From three apes to two, just like that."

He held up his hand, snapped his fingers, shaking his head ruefully.

"Remember the story of the boat, world of future drowning victims?"

To this, the Dni nodded, blinking, a realization dawning.

"That man, the one who collected those mating pairs, he found three apes. There could be only two admitted aboard the ship - so a fight began.. then it ended, like the fight in the other story."

Then the human turned on a viewscreen, gesturing to it without looking. On it, tens of thousands of Terran troops marched into an endless parade of shuttles bearing them into the skies, where waiting battlecruisers were prepared to take them on, their destination becoming more obvious as the moments passed.

With that, he clicked off the screen and looked to his counterpart.

"Elder Fier, if you think us being outnumbered will matter, you are wrong. If you feel we can't outshoot you, you are wrong. If you have the impression our victories will not be bittersweet, yet almost perpetual, then clearly, you were not listening." He drew a short breath. "We fight each other over that story's validity, origin, and interpretation. We tortured and killed our own kind for tens of thousands of years before we even knew how to write about it. Your species fought in, and admittedly won, exactly six wars in three thousand years. We average two wars a year. We lose about seven percent of our battles and win one hundred percent of our wars."

And then the Terran rose to his full height and extended his hand for shake; a custom accepted by species which could accept such gestures with appropriate limbs or appendages.

"Mr. Egils?" the Dni said, his eyes suddenly acrid-hot with newfound sorrow for the future. "I.. wish to retract my sentiments earlier. No.. no war is needed."

To this, the Terran nodded, though he did shake the Dni's hand firmly.

"They rarely are, Elder Fier, and now you know why you should have listened to us before this became unstoppable. Go, hug your family close, while you can, before you can't. You have my sympathies."

Then he stood, holding open the door to the rest of the council row, wherein two hundred similar doors lay closed, all of them occupied, some with the harried and concerned, others the sedate, nearly relaxed.

"We are the descendants of both of those third apes, and brother, it is starting to rain."